

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-10 (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A drawing furnace for manufacturing optical fiber of a substantially vertical fiber preform, the drawing furnace comprising:

a tubular heating element surrounding the fiber preform, for heating the fiber preform;

an ~~outside~~ insulating layer arranged outside of the heating element;

a frame part ~~of the drawing furnace in order to place~~ operative to support said heating element and said insulating layer in the drawing furnace;

a cover part ~~in order~~ operative to close ~~the~~ an area between said heating element and said frame part to insulate the insulating layer and/or ~~the~~ an area surrounding the insulating layer from ~~the~~ a gas flow surrounding the fiber preform; and

a gas ~~tube fitted~~ supply arranged between said cover part and said heating element ~~in order~~ and operative to feed gas to ~~the~~ a gas area surrounding the fiber preform;

wherein the cover part is ~~further fitted mobile~~ movable in relation to the frame part such that a location of the cover part in relation to an upper edge of the heating element remains constant when ~~the~~ a length of the heating element changes, and thus ~~in such a manner that a~~ force, which ~~is substantially constant and~~ seals the gas ~~tube~~ supply to ~~the~~ an end of the heating element, is ~~directed at said gas tube~~ substantially constant in all modes of operation of the drawing furnace.

12. (cancelled)

13. (currently amended) The drawing furnace according to the claim 11, ~~wherein the drawing furnace comprises~~ further comprising:

fastening means for pressing the cover part substantially with a constant force towards the heating element.

14. (cancelled)

15. (currently amended) The drawing furnace according to claim 13, wherein ~~one or more springs or the like are used as~~ the fastening means comprises at least one spring.

16. (cancelled)

17. (currently amended) The drawing furnace according to claim 13, wherein ~~one or more means, whose pressing force is created with gravity, are used as~~ the fastening means comprises at least one means having a pressing force created by gravity.

18. (currently amended) The drawing furnace according to claim 11, wherein the gas ~~tube~~ supply comprises one or more outer rings ~~tubes~~ and one or more inner rings ~~tubes~~ arranged inside the outer ~~tube~~ ring, which said outer rings ~~tubes~~ and inner rings ~~tubes~~ are arranged concentrically in relation to the fiber preform.

19. (currently amended) The drawing furnace according to claim 11, wherein the gas flow to ~~the~~ a gas space surrounding the fiber preform is arranged through ~~the~~ channels and ~~the~~ holes placed in the gas ~~tube~~ supply, the holes including openings ~~of the holes~~ opening to said gas space and symmetrically ~~surround~~ surrounding the fiber preform substantially in a horizontal plane.

20. (currently amended) The drawing furnace according to the claim 11, wherein the gas flow to ~~the~~ a gas space surrounding the fiber preform is arranged through ~~the~~ channels placed in the gas ~~tube~~ supply and one substantially uniform and horizontal hole, the hole including an opening ~~of the hole opening~~ to said gas space that surrounds the fiber preform substantially over ~~the~~ an entire circle.

21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) The drawing furnace according to claim 19, wherein the holes/hole form a the gas ~~tube~~ supply between the first inner ~~tube~~ ring and the second inner ~~tube~~ ring.

23. (currently amended) The drawing furnace according to claim 20, wherein the holes/hole form a the gas ~~tube~~ supply between the first inner ~~tube~~ ring and the second inner ~~tube~~ ring.

24. (cancelled)

25. (currently amended) The drawing furnace according to claim 22, wherein the dimensions of the holes/hole placed in the gas ~~tube~~ supply remain substantially unchanged in all modes of operation of the drawing furnace.

26. (cancelled)

27. (new) The drawing furnace according to claim 11, wherein a force between the cover part and the heating elements is adjustable.